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ABSTRACT

This study used data drawn from about 2,300 parents of children in eight Chapter 1, inner-city Baltimore (Maryland) elementary and middle schools to examine the extent of parent involvement at home and at school. Also examined was the extent to which the schools used practices designed to involve parents. Survey questionnaires included over 75 items on: (1) parent attitudes toward their children's school; (2) school subjects parents wanted to know more about; (3) the frequency of various forms of parent involvement in children's education; (4) the degree to which school programs and teacher practices informed and involved parents in children's education; (5) what workshop topics parents would select; (6) times of day parents preferred for school meetings or conferences; (7) amount of time children spent on homework; (8) whether parents helped with homework; and (9) background information about parents' education, work, and family size. Parents reported little involvement at school. They expressed a desire for advice about how to help their children at home and better information from schools about what their children were doing and were expected to do in school. The level of parent involvement was directly linked to specific school practices designed to encourage parent involvement at school and guide parents in helping at home. (Author/RH)

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Center for Research On Elementary & Middle Schools

Report No. 33

March, 1989

PARENT ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN INNER-CITY ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Susan L. Dauber and Joyce L. Epstein

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Parent Attitudes and Practices of Parent Involvement

In Inner-City Elementary and Middle Schools

Grant No. OERI-G-90006

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The Center

The mission of the Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools is to produce useful knowledge about how elementary and middle schools can foster growth in students' learning and development, to develop and evaluate practical methods for improving the effectiveness of elementary and middle schools based on existing and new research findings, and to develop and evaluate specific strategies to help schools implement effective research-based school and classroom practices.

The Center conducts its research in three program areas: (1) Elementary Schools; (2) Middle Schools, and (3) School Improvement.

The Elementary School Program

This program works from a strong existing research base to develop, evaluate, and disseminate effective elementary school and classroom practices; synthesizes current knowledge; and analyzes survey and descriptive data to expand the knowledge base in effective elementary education.

The Middle School Program

This program's research links current knowledge about early adolescence as a stage of human development to school organization and classroom policies and practices for effective middle schools. The major task is to establish a research base to identify specific problem areas and promising practices in middle schools that will contribute to effective policy decisions and the development of effective school and classroom practices.

School Improvement Program

This program focuses on improving the organizational performance of schools in adopting and adapting innovations and developing school capacity for change.

This report, prepared for the Elementary and Middle School Programs, examines the attitudes of parents of inner-city elementary and middle school students toward involvement in schools and the practices of parent involvement found in their children's schools.

Abstract

This study uses data from approximately 2300 parents whose children attend eight inner-city elementary and middle schools to examine the extent to which parent involvement exists at home and at school, the extent to which the schools conduct practices to involve parents, and the attitudes of these parents toward the schools their children attend. Parents report little involvement at the school itself, report that they want the schools and teachers to advise them about how to help their children at home, and report that they want schools to keep them better informed about what their children are doing and are expected to do in school each year. The level of parent involvement was directly linked to the specific practices of a school to encourage involvement at school and to guide parents in how to help at home.

Parents' Attitudes and Practices of Involvement in Inner-City Elementary and Middle Schools

Parent involvement -- or school and family connections -- is one component of effective schools that deserves special consideration because it contributes to successful family environments and more successful students. Research conducted for nearly a quarter century has shown convincingly that parent involvement is important for children's learning, attitudes about school, and aspirations. Children are more successful students at all grade levels if their parents participate at school and encourage education and learning at home, whatever the educational background or social class of their parents.

Most research on parent involvement has focused on *parents* who become involved on their own, without connecting parents' actions to the practices of their children's teachers. Some research on parent involvement conducted over the past several years asks more crucial questions by focusing on the actions of the *schools*: Can schools successfully involve all parents in their children's education, especially those parents who would not become involved on their own? How can schools involve parents whose children are at risk of failing in school? If schools involve all parents in important ways, are there measurable benefits to students, to parents, and to teaching practice?

From recent research we have learned that schools' programs and teachers' practices to involve parents have important positive effects on parents' abilities to help their children across the grades, on parents' ratings of teachers' skills and teaching quality, on teachers' opinions about parents' abilities to help their children on schoolwork at home, on students' attitudes about school, homework, and the similarity of their school and family, and on students' reading achievement (Becker and Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1986, and in press a; Epstein, 1982; Epstein and Dauber, 1988).

However, few studies have focused on schools with large populations of educationally disadvantaged students or "hard-to-reach" parents (Epstein, 1988b). A recurring theme in some studies is that less-educated parents do not want to or cannot become involved in their children's education (Baker and Stevenson, 1986; Lareau, 1987). But other research challenges this assumption by showing that some teachers successfully involve parents of the most disadvantaged students in important ways (Clark, 1983; Comer, 1980; Epstein, in press b; Epstein and Dauber, 1988; Rich, Van Dien, and Mattox, 1979; Rubin, Olmsted, Szegda, Wetherby and Williams, 1983; Scott-Jones, 1980).

Earlier studies of teachers and parents focused on one level of schooling, either elementary schools (Becker and Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1986; in press a, b); middle schools or junior high schools (Leitch and Tangri, 1988; Baker and Stevenson, 1986); or high schools (Bauch, 1988; Clark, 1983; Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988). This paper uses data from inner-city parents to study how parents in economically disadvantaged communities say they are involved, or want to be involved, and how involvement compares in the elementary and middle grades.

Study Design

Eight Chapter 1 schools in Baltimore City are involved in an "action research" program in cooperation with a local foundation. The Fund for Educational Excellence in Baltimore makes small grants directly to the schools to help teachers increase and improve parent involvement. Teacher Representatives for Parent Involvement from the eight schools attended a two-day summer workshop on school and family connections. They helped design survey questionnaires for teachers and for parents (Epstein and Becker, 1987) for use in each school that identify where schools are starting from on five major types of parent involvement (Epstein, 1987). The teachers were provided with small planning grants to help them distribute and collect the surveys.

Each school was given non-technical "clinical summaries" of the data from teachers and from parents to help them understand their present strengths and weaknesses in parent involve-

ment (Epstein, 1988a; Epstein and Salinas, 1988). The schools used the data to develop action plans for improving parent involvement programs and practices. The teachers who are directing the projects are supported by small grants each year to cover expenses to implement and to help evaluate the activities they design.

Data from 171 teachers in these schools on their attitudes and practices of parent involvement were reported in a separate paper (Epstein and Dauber, 1989). The data from teachers showed:

> o Teachers generally agreed that parent involvement is important for student success and for teacher effectiveness.
>
> o Teachers were more sure about what they wanted *from parents* than about what they wanted to do *for parents*. Almost all teachers reported that they expected all parents to fulfill 12 responsibilities, ranging from teaching their children to behave, to knowing what children are expected to learn each year, to helping them on those skills. Few teachers, however, had comprehensive programs to help parents attain these skills.
>
> o Elementary school programs were stronger, more positive, and more comprehensive than those in the middle grades.
>
> o The individual teacher was a key factor, but not the only factor in building strong school programs. Analyses of "discrepancy scores" showed that differences between self and principal, self and teacher colleagues, and self and parents were significantly associated with the strength of schools' parent involvement programs. Programs and practices were stronger in schools where teachers saw that they, their colleagues, and the parents all felt strongly about the importance of parent involvement.

The reports about parent involvement from teachers in inner-city elementary and middle schools are important, but tell only half the story about what is happening in any school. Data from parents are needed to fully understand where schools are starting from and the potential to improve parent involvement practices. This paper combines the data from the parents in all eight schools to study the present practices and patterns of parent involvement of parents in inner-city elementary and middle grades. We examine parents' reports of their attitudes about their children's schools, their own practices at home, their perceptions of how the school involves parents, and their wishes or preferences for actions and programs by the schools.

The questionnaires include over 75 items of information on parent attitudes toward their children's school, the school subjects that parents want to know more about, how frequently the parents are involved in different ways in their children's education, how well school programs and teacher practices inform and involve them in their children's education, what workshop topics they would select, the times of day that parents prefer meetings or conferences at school, how much time their children spend on homework and whether the parents help, and background information about parents' education, work, and family size.

Parents responded in large numbers to the opportunity to give their opinions about their involvement and school practices. Over 50% of the parents in each school returned questionnaires (N= 2317) -- a respectable rate of return given that no follow ups were possible due to school schedules and budget contraints.

The eight Chapter 1 inner-city schools -- five elementary and three middle schools -- were selected at random from groups of similar Chapter 1 schools that serve children and families who live in public housing projects, rental homes and apartments, and privately owned homes in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Table 1 outlines the characteristics of the parent population. Although both elementary and middle grades parents are well-represented, the sample includes almost twice as many single parents as the national average, more parents without high school diplomas, and larger family sizes than would be true in the general population.

Table 1 About Here

Despite the limitations of the sample, this study offers unique comparable data from parents with children in elementary and middle schools. Indeed, because of the educational and economic disadvantages of the sample, we can put questions of parent involvement to a stringent test.

Measures

Parents' Reports of Their Involvement

Parents rated the frequency of their involvement in conducting 18 different practices included under five major types of parent involvement -- parenting and supervising at home, communicating with the school, volunteering at the school, conducting learning activities at home, and participating in PTA or parent leadership activities. The main measures of parents' practices are:

Parent Involvement At The School (PINVSCH) -- 5-item measure of the frequency of helping (never, not yet, 1-2 times, many times) at the school building.

Parent Involvement With Homework (PINVHW) -- 5-item measure of the frequency of assisting and monitoring homework.

Parent Involvment In Reading Activities At Home (PINVREAD) -- 4-item measure of the frequency of parent help to students in reading.

Total Parent Involvement (PINVTOT) -- 18-item measure of the frequency of parents' use of all types of parent involvement at home and at school.

Parents' Reports of the Schools' Practices to Involve Parents

Parents rated the schools on whether and how well the schools conduct nine types of parent involvement practices. The activities include the five types of parent involvement, ranging from the school telling parents how the child is doing in school, to giving parents ideas of how to help at home. The main measures of school practices as reported by parents are:

School Practices To Communicate With Parents And Involve Them At School (SCHCOMMUN) -- 5-item measure of how well the school communicates with parents to provide information about school programs and activities.

School Practices To Involve Parents At Home (SCHHOMEPI) -- 4-item measure of how well the school contacts and guides parents to help their own children at home.

Total Program To Involve Parents (SCHTOTPI) -- 9-item measure of extent to which the school contacts and guides parents to involve them in their children's education at home and at school.

Other Measures

Parent Attitudes About The School (PATT) -- 6-item measure of the quality of the child's school.

Family background measures include Parent Education, Marital Status, Family Size, Parent Working Outside The Home, and Ratings Of Student Ability.

The several scales of parents' reports of their own practices, the schools' practices to involve them, and their attitudes toward their children's school have modest to high reliabilities. These are reported in Table 2.

Table 2 About Here

Effects On Parent Involvement

Table 3 summarizes analyses of the effects of parents' characteristics and family and school practices on parents' reported involvement at school and at home. The four panels of the table report the variables that significantly explain parent involvement at school (panel 1), at home on homework (panel 2), at home on reading, in particular (panel 3), and on total parent involvement at school, on homework, on reading, and on other learning activities (panel 4).

Table 3 About Here

Level Of Schooling (Elementary or Middle School)

School level has strong, independent effects on all measures of parent practices and school practices. Parents of children in the elementary grades are more involved than parents of children in the middle grades. According to the parents' reports, elementary school teachers do more and do better to involve parents in their children's education at school (b= -.13); at home on

homework (b= -.14); on reading activities at home (b= -.08); and overall on all types of involvement (b = -.16).

Within middle schools, parents of sixth and seventh graders are more likely to be involved in their children's education at home. Parents of eighth graders are more involved at the school building. Because these data were collected early in the school year, parents of sixth graders were still relatively new to the school and may not yet have been included in the small core of parent volunteers in middle schools. Sixth grade students may be more apt to ask for help at home if they are still unsure of themselves in a new school setting. Older students (eighth-graders) may feel that they are more knowledgeable than their parents about schoolwork and school decisions.

Family Characteristics

In all cases, parents who are better educated are more involved at school and at home than parents who are less educated. Other family characteristics affect different types of involvement. Parents with fewer children are more involved with their children at home (b=-.07), but family size is not a significant factor for explaining parent involvement at school. Parents who work are significantly less likely to participate at the school building (b=-.06), but working outside the home is not a significant predictor of involvement at home. Marital status had no significant effects on involvement either at school or at home.

Student Characteristics

In all analyses, parents were more involved in their children's education if the children were better students. These cross-sectional data cannot be interpreted to mean that students whose parents are involved *become* better students. However, the results of earlier studies that used fall-to-spring test scores over one school year suggest that teachers' practices to involve parents in reading resulted in greater reading gains for children in those teachers' classrooms (Epstein, in press a). Parents whose children are doing well or are doing better in school are more likely to

do more to assure their children's continued success.

School Programs And Teachers' Practices

The strongest and most consistent predictors of parent involvement at school and at home are the specific school programs and teacher practices that encourage and guide parent involvement. Regardless of parent education, family size, student ability, or school level (elementary or middle school), parents are more likely to become partners in their children's education if they perceive that the schools have strong practices to involve parents at school (b= .27), at home on homework (b= .18), and at home on reading activities (b= .16). The sum of all nine school practices has the strongest effect on parents' total involvement (b= .30), after all other factors have been statistically controlled.

When parents believe the schools are doing little to involve them, they report doing little at home. When parents perceive that the school is doing many things to involve them, they are more involved in their children's education at school and at home. The schools' practices -- not just family characteristics -- make a difference in whether parents become involved and feel informed in their children's education.

Classroom-Level Reports Of School Practices

Individual parents in one teacher's class may view the teacher's practices from a personal perspective. For example, one parent may receive special advice from a teacher about how to help a child at home or become involved at school. Or, all parents of students in a classroom may report the teachers' practices similarly if they recognize that the teachers' regular practice is to involve all parents. We checked to see how individual parent reports compared to the reports of other parents in the same classroom. We can begin to understand whether parent involvement is a phenomenological process or a general, classroom process by examining how whole classrooms of parents report the teachers' requests for involvement.

In this sample, only parents of children in the elementary grades could be identified by classroom for aggregated reports. The 1135 parents of children in 86 elementary school teachers' classrooms provided assessments of school practices to inform and involve parents. An average or "consensus" score was calculated for each classroom and merged with the parents' individual records.

Parents' individual reports were significantly and positively correlated with the reports of all other parents in the classroom (between r= .28 and r= .44). The highest agreement among parents came on the parents' reports about the amount of time that their children spend on homework (r=.44). Individual and aggregate scores were correlated slightly lower on whether the teacher guides parents on how to help with homework (r=.32).

Parents also were in high agreement about the overall quality of their children's school. The correlation was +.38 between an average parent's report that a school was good or poor and the reports of all of the parents in the same classroom. The modest but significant correlations suggest that there is agreement about school and teacher practices to involve parents, but there also is considerable variation in the interpretations of teachers' practices by individual parents in the same classroom.

Classroom averages of parents' reports of a teacher's practices may be more objective measures than one parent's report of a teacher's practices. We compare the effects of the classroom level and individual level measures on parents' practices in Table 4.

Table 4 About Here

The first line of Table 4 shows the individual effects; the second line shows the effects on parent involvement of the classroom aggregate measures of teachers' practices. On all types of involvement, the individual level reports have stronger effects than the aggregated reports on parents' practices at school and at home. The two measures can be viewed as providing a "range

of effects," with the "truth" somewhere between the two coefficients.

How accurately does any one parent report a teacher's practices? Do teachers treat all parents in a classroom similarly to involve them at school and at home? The coefficients in Table 4 suggest that despite some consensus about teachers' practices among parents in a class, there is much room for individual interpretation of teacher practices and the translation of those practices into parent practices. All parents of children in a classroom may not be treated alike by a teacher, and may not interpret teacher behaviors in the same way. The strongest effects on parent involvement at school and at home are demonstrated by parents who personally understand and act on the teacher practices that encourage their involvement.

In strong or "improving" schools, the correspondence between one parent's report and all other parents in the class would increase over time. This would mean that all parents similarly understood the teacher's practices. There would, of course, always be some differences in individual responses to requests for involvement.

Student Time On Homework And Parent Involvement

Homework is one key and common way that parents become involved in what their children are learning in school. We asked parents several questions about their children's homework practices and their own involvement on homework activities. Table 5 shows comparisons of homework activities of elementary and middle school students and the help they receive from parents. According to parents:

- Middle school students spend more time doing homework on an average night than do elementary students.

- Parents of elementary school children help more minutes and feel more able to help their children with reading and math than do parents of middle school students.

- Parents of children at both levels of school say they COULD help more (up to 45-50

minutes, if necessary, on average) if the teacher guided them in how to help at home.

- o Parents of children at both levels of school say they have time to help on weekends. Often, students are not assigned homework on weekends -- the very time many parents have more time to interact with their children.

- o More elementary than middle school parents report that their child likes to talk about school at home. But even among elementary school students, many parents -- close to 40% -- do not think that their children really enjoy such discussions.

- o More elementary than middle school parents report that their children's schools and teachers have good programs that guide them in how to help at home to check their child's homework. But, even at the elementary level only 35% of the parents think their school "DOES WELL" on this.

Table 5 About Here

Other data (not reported in Table 5) indicate that more-educated parents say that their children spend more time on homework. These parents may be more aware of the homework that their children have to do, or they may make sure the children do all of their homework, or these parents' children may be in classrooms where the teachers give more homework. Less-educated parents say they could help more if the teachers told them how to help. More-educated parents may believe they are already helping enough, or that they are already receiving good information from the teacher on how to help.

Table 6 reports the results of multiple regression analyses conducted to determine the factors that affect how much time parents spend monitoring, assisting, or otherwise helping their children with homework.

Table 6 About Here

As noted, level of schooling affects the time parents spend helping at home. With all other variables statistically controlled, parents of elementary students spend more time helping on homework (b= -.18). Regardless of school level, parents help for more minutes if their children spend more time on homework. Alternative explanations are that when parents help it takes students more time to do their homework; or parents help when their children have a lot of homework assigned.

Neither parents' education, family size, nor marital status -- all indicators of family social class and social structure -- are significantly associated with parents' help with homework. Parents who work outside the home spend fewer minutes helping their children than do other parents. Parents whose children need the most help in schoolwork (rated by parents as "fair" or "poor students") spend the most minutes helping with homework (b= -.08). Other analyses show that this is especially true in the elementary grades. Parents of less able elementary grades students may believe that if they give their children extra help on homework, the students have a chance to succeed in school. By the middle grades, parents who rate their children as "poor students" do not help their children as much as parents of "average students." In the middle grades, parents may feel they are not able to help their academically weak children without special guidance from teachers about how to help. Parents of top students do not help as many minutes in the middle grades, in part because the students do not need or ask for assistance, and in part because teachers do not guide parents' involvement.

Other analyses show that, in the middle grades, poor students spend the least amount of time on homework. Thus there is less investment in homework time by middle grades students who are academically weak, less investment in helping behavior by parents of these students, and less investment by middle grades teachers in informing parents about how to help their children at

this level.

Even after all family and student characteristics are statistically accounted for, there is a significant, positive, and important effect on the time parents interact with their children of teachers' reported practices to guide parents in how to help their children with homework (b=.10). The variables in these analyses explain about 28% of the variance in the time parents spend helping on homework.

There is an interesting contrast in Tables 3 and 6 concerning parent involvement at home on homework. Table 3 shows that more-educated parents and parents of better students report that they are involved in *more and different ways* of helping at home on homework. Table 6 reports that parents of weaker or less able students spend *more minutes* helping their children on an average night. Types of help and time for helping are different indicators of involvement. It may be that over time, many different ways to help and more minutes helping lead to more success for students on schoolwork. The different patterns suggest that students' different needs are being addressed by parents. Students who need more help take more minutes of their parents' time. Students who are better students may require many different kinds of assistance. The important similarity in Tables 3 and 6 is that the specific practices of the teachers to guide parents in how to help at home increases the types of help parents say they give and the time they give to help their children.

Discussion

Several general findings from the data from inner-city parents increase our understanding of parent involvement in their children's education in the elementary and middle grades:

o Most parents believe that their children attend a good school, that the teachers care about their children, and the parents feel welcome at the school. But there is considerable variation in these attitudes, with many parents unhappy or unsure about the quality of their children's schools

and teachers. Interestingly, we also found that parents' attitudes about the quality of their children's school are more highly correlated with the school's practices to involve parents (.346) than with the parents' own practices of involvement (.157). Parents who become involved at home and at school say that the school has a positive climate. But even more so, parents who believe that the school is actively working to involve them, say that the school is a good one. This connection supports earlier findings that parents give teachers higher ratings if the teachers frequently involve parents in their children's education (Epstein, 1985, 1986).

o Parents report little involvement at the school building. Many parents work full- or part-time and cannot come to the school building during the school day. Others report that they have not been asked by the school to become volunteers, but would like to be.

o Parents in all of the schools in this sample are emphatic about wanting the schools and teachers to advise them about *how to help their own children at home* at each grade level. Parents believe that the schools need to strengthen practices such as giving parents specific information on their children's major academic subjects and what their children are expected to learn each year.

o Parents of young children and more-educated parents conduct more activities at home that support their children's schooling.

o Parents who were guided by teachers on how to help at home spent more minutes helping their children with homework than other parents.

o Most important for policy and practice, parents' level of involvement is directly linked to the specific practices of the school that encourage involvement at school and guide parents in how to help at home. The data are clear that the *schools' practices* to inform and to involve parents are more important than parent education, family size, marital status, and even grade level in determining whether inner-city parents stay involved with their children's education through the middle grades.

Although teachers in these urban, Chapter 1 schools reported that most parents are not involved and do not want to be (Epstein and Dauber, 1989), the parents of students in the same schools tell a different story. They say that they are involved with their children, but that they need more and better information from teachers about how to help at home. Parents and teachers have different perspectives that must be recognized and taken into account in developing activities to improve parent involvement over time. In further analyses, we will merge the data from the teachers and parents to study the direct connections between teachers' practices and parents' opinions and responses.

Earlier research showed that some of the strongest immediate effects of teachers' practices of parent involvement are on *parents' attitudes and behaviors* (Epstein, 1986). This study suggests the same is true for inner-city parents. Parents are more involved at school and at home when they perceive that the schools have strong programs that encourage parent involvement. The implication is that all schools -- including inner-city schools -- can develop more comprehensive programs of parent involvement to help more families become knowledgeable partners in their children's education.

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Table 1

Characteristics of the Sample of Parents
(N = 2317)

Elementary school parents (N = 1135)	49.0%
Middle school parents (N = 1182)	51.0%
Single parents	43.4%
Working outside home (full or part time)	63.7%
Did not complete high school	31.0%
Completed high school	40.6%
Beyond high school	28.3%
Average family size (adults and children)	4.4%
Parent rating of student ability:	
Top student	7.6%
Good student	32.4%
Average/ok student	35.2%
Fair student	21.8%
Poor student	3.0%

Table 2

Measures of Parent Involvement and Attitudes

			MEAN	RELIABILITY
Parent Involvement at the School	(PINVSCH)	5-items	2.36	.69
Parent Involvement with Homework	(PINVHW)	5-items	3.54	.63
Parent Involvement in Reading Activities at Home	(PINVREAD)	4-items	3.00	.58
TOTAL PARENT INVOLVEMENT	(PINVTOT)	18-items	3.07	.81
Parent Attitudes Toward the School	(PATT)	6-items	3.29	.75
School Practices to Communicate with Parents and Involve Them at School	(SCHCOMMUN)	5-items	2.35	.71
School Practices to Involve Parents at Home	(SCHHOMPI)	4-items	2.04	.81
TOTAL SCHOOL PROGRAM TO INVOLVE PARENTS	(SCHTOTPI)	9-items	2.21	.81

Table 3

Effects on Extent of Parents' Involvement of School Level, Family Characteristics, and Reported Teacher Practices to Involve Parents

	Extent of Parent Involvement			
	At School	At Home on Homework	At Home on Reading Skills	Total Parent Involvement
	(b = standardized beta coefficient) <a> <b>			
	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
School level (elementary or middle)	-.13	-.14	-.08	-.16
Parent's education	.11	.08	.13	.13
Family size	NS	-.07	-.06	-.07
Parent works outside home	-.06	NS	NS	NS
Rating of student ability	.06	.10	.15	.13
Teacher practices to involve parents <c>				
at school	.27	--	--	--
at home	--	.18	.16	--
overall	--	--	--	.30
N	1447	1489	1512	1248
R	.14	.09	.08	.18

<a> Listwise regression analyses are reported to eliminate all cases with missing data. This procedure was checked with pairwise procedures that add about 300 cases to analyses and the results were all but identical.

<b> All reported coefficients are significant at or beyond the .05 level; coefficients of .10 or more are particularly important.

<c> Each equation includes the parents' reports of teachers' practices that most directly link to the type of involvement of the parents. That is, school practices that include asking the parent to come to school are used in the equation to explain parents' involvement at school; school practices that guide parents in how to help at home are used in the equation to explain parents' involvement at home on homework and reading skills; and the sum of all school practices is used in the equation to explain parents' total involvement.

Table 4

Comparison of Effects of Individual Level and Classroom Level Reports of Teacher Practices to Involve Parents (Elementary School Level Only)

	Extent of Elementary School Parent Involvement			
	At School	At Home on Homework	At Home on Reading Skills	Total Parent Involvement
	(b = standardized regression coefficient) <a>			
Effect of:				
Individual parent's report of teacher practices <b>	.28	.20	.16	.33
Individual parent background and classroom parents' consensus of teacher practices <b> <c>	.07	NS	NS	.13
Aggregate parent background and classroom parents' consensus teacher practices <b> <d>	.22	.24	.14	.27

<a> Listwise regression yields analyses with from 603 to 782 cases for elementary school parents. The same background variables are statistically controlled as shown in Table 3.

<b> Linked measures of teachers' practices (as shown in Table 3) are used in these analyses.

<c> Aggregate reports from all parents in a classroom about teacher's practices of parent involvement is used instead of an individual's report.

<d> Aggregate reports from all parents in a classroom including aggregate background and reports about teachers' practices of parent involvement.

Table 5

Parents' Reports About Homework

	SCHOOL LEVEL ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE
	N=1135	N=1182
Average Time on Homework	30-35 min.	35-40 min.
Average Time Parent Helps	30-35 min.	25-30 min.
% Strongly Able to Help with Reading	75.9	67.1
% Strongly Able to Help with Math	71.8	55.4
Average Time Parent Could Help If Teacher Gave Information	45-50 min.	45-50 min.
% Have Time to Help on Weekends	95.3	91.9
% Strongly Think Child Should Get More Homework	40.0	35.6
% Strongly Agree That Child Likes to Talk About School at Home	62.4	45.3
% Report that School Explains How to Check Child's Homework	35.7	25.0

Table 6

Effects on Minutes Parents Help With Homework of School Level, Family Characteristics, Students' Homework Time, and Teachers' Practices to Involve Parents on Homework

	Minutes Parents Help (b = standardized beta) <a> <b>
School level (elementary or middle)	-.18
Students' homework time	.51
Parents' education	NS
Family size	NS
Single parent	NS
Parent works outside home	-.08
Rating of student ability	-.08
Teachers' practices to guide parent help on homework	.10
N	1560
R	.28

<a> Listwise regression analyses are reported.

<b> All reported coefficients are significant at or beyond the .05 level; coefficients of .10 are particularly important.